

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Please amend the claims by canceling claims 1-18 and adding new claims 19-24, all without prejudice, as indicated on the following listing of all the claims in the present application after this Amendment:

(Claims 1-18 have been cancelled.)

19.(New) A method for programming a voltage threshold (V_t) level of a core cell in a memory device, the method comprising steps of:

- determining a desired V_t for the core cell;
- programming a portion of the V_t of the core cell using a selected programming strength;
- verifying that the portion of the V_t is successfully programmed;
- adjusting the selected programming strength; and
- repeating the step of programming, verifying, and adjusting until the V_t of the core cell is substantially equal to the desired V_t .

20.(New) The method of claim 19, further comprising, after the step of verifying, a step of returning to the step of programming using the selected programming strength if it is determined that the portion of the V_t was unsuccessfully programmed.

21.(New) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of adjusting is a step of weakening the selected programming strength.

22.(New) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of adjusting is a step of weakening the selected programming strength as the V_t of the core cell approaches the desired V_t .

23.(New) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of adjusting is a step of weakening the selected programming strength after each successful steep of verifying.

24.(New) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of adjusting comprises steps of:

using the same selected programming strength for a first selected number of programming steps; and

weakening the programming strength for a second selected number of programming steps.